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ABSTRACT

This paper is a review of literature, written between 1973 and 1980, concerning various factors affecting the cooperating teacher's role and responsibilities during the student teaching experience. Areas covered are: (1) perceived status of the cooperating teacher; (2) relationship of other roles in the internship to that of the cooperating teacher; (3) competencies and behaviors of cooperating teachers; (4) relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher; and (5) attitudes and opinions of the cooperating teacher. Suggestions are made regarding factors that should be considered by teacher training institutions when planning student teaching assignments. The 88 references reviewed are listed. (Author/JD)

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A Review: Factors that Affect Cooperating Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities in the Internship

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a review of the literature between 1973 and 1980 on the various affecting factors of relating to the cooperating teacher's role and responsibilities in the internship. The two main areas of research on this subject are covered plus the four areas that are not well represented in the research. The areas covered are: the perceived status of the cooperating teacher; the relationship of other roles in the internship to that of the cooperating teachers; the competencies and behaviors of cooperating teachers; the relationships between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher; and, the attitudes and the opinions of the cooperating teacher.

Some suggestions are made regarding action that should be taken in the light of results of the research reviewed. A course of action for further research is covered with a view to the current practices, as revealed by the literature, in college of education internship programs.

A Review: Factors That Affect Cooperating Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities in the Internship.

The purpose of this paper is to determine what the literature contained (1974-1979) about the roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers as held by the cooperating teachers, the intern, the university supervisor, and any others involved with the preservice, practice teaching internship. When preservice teachers are placed in schools to complete their practice teaching requirements, internships, for an undergraduate teaching certificate, diploma, or degree, they are usually placed with one or more classroom teachers. These classroom teachers are usually called either cooperating or supervising teachers.

The process of selection of cooperating teachers varies greatly as do the practices concerning the other factors pertinent to internships. The cooperating teachers may or may not be consulted about: the areas of concern for preservice teachers in practice teaching; how to evaluate internships; the cooperating teacher's role in the internship; and, the cooperating teacher's responsibilities in the internship.

The internship, the student teaching experience, is an important aspect of preservice teacher's education as it is where educational theory is put into practice. One person, the cooperating teacher, is going to be the only person in contact with the student teacher every teaching day of the internship. Hopefully, the cooperating teacher

has been carefully selected and fully informed of all the details of the internship. Usually, this is the only long-time, full-day opportunity the student teacher is given to develop the necessary skills and techniques of teaching that previously had only been presented in theory.

Pritchard (1974) reviewed the literature of the 1960's and early 1970's on the variables in the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship prior to and during the internship. An increasing interest in this area was revealed. The literature affirmed the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher as extremely important, but there was no agreement on which variables, personality factors or demographic factors, operated to cause the observable changes in the attitudes and behaviors of those being studied. In the internship situation, the preservice teachers are very concerned about reducing disagreements between themselves and their cooperating teachers. Pritchard felt that the cooperating teacher should be a model that would promote creativity in the student teacher.

The research that Pritchard looked at suggested that the technique of interaction analysis as developed by Flanders (1970) would improve the performance of the cooperating teacher as a model. Flander's system of feedback and other similar systems offered the most promise to help reduce the sources of disagreement between cooperating teachers and their student teachers. The review of the

literature done for this paper looks at more than just the matching of student teachers with cooperating teachers.

The Status of the Cooperating Teacher

The literature consistently supports the belief that the cooperating teacher is the single most important person in preservice teacher education (Heitzman, 1977; Johnston, Houston, Cooper, Warner, Stell, and Turner, 1976; Egelhoff-Akiba, 1975; Palmer, 1974). There is no disagreement on this fact in any of the literature. Yet, with the acceptance of the cooperating teacher as the most influential agent in the internship, there has not been any concerted move to properly prepare and involve the cooperating teachers for their very important role and its responsibilities (Lepke, 1979; Kapel and Sadler, 1978; Church, 1976; Tom, 1975). Even though the descriptive literature invariably supports the major role of the cooperating teacher in the internship, there is little said in terms of the cooperating teachers needs and wishes as related to decision making and their role in the internship (Kapel and Sadler, 1978).

Sadler (1974) conducted a survey of secondary education student teachers that revealed that these student teachers relied more heavily on the cooperating teacher than on the university supervisor for assistance. The cooperating teachers felt that they should be more involved in the decision-making related to the internship.

(Bush, 1976). The study conducted by Kapel and Sadler (1978) used an opinionaire (Bush, 1976) to survey 175 cooperating teachers and university supervisors on their respective roles in the internship. The results indicated that the cooperating teachers did not view themselves as very involved in internship decision making and wished to be more involved. The university supervisors viewed the cooperating teachers as being more involved in decision-making than the cooperating teachers viewed themselves. Also, the university supervisors did not think the cooperating teachers should be as involved in decision-making as the cooperating teachers reported themselves as wishing to be.

A number of studies were conducted to determine how effective training programs were for improving the performance of cooperating teacher during the internship (Westbrook and Watson, 1978; Peterson, 1977). Other studies included the university supervisors and the student teacher as well as the cooperating teacher in these training programs (Printer & Weiner, 1979; Church, 1976). Many institutions either had their own version of a cooperating teacher's training program, or else had written materials, in the form of handbooks, for the cooperating teacher.

The area of concern in the selection of cooperating teachers were that they be academically qualified, be willing to accept student teachers, and be aware of the role and responsibilities of cooperating teachers (Williamson, 1979; Alabama A & M University, 1978). Cooperating

teachers were expected to perform the following tasks for the student teachers: introduce them to the school environment; gradually involve them in classroom expectations and responsibilities; observe the students' classes; discuss the observations; and, evaluate the students' performance (Aichele, 1979; Aichele, 1978; Hamilton, Norton, Fardig, Harrington, and Quinn, 1978; Ciampa, 1975).

There is still a need for a more consistent and universal approach to the preparation and selection of cooperating teachers. Their highly influential role in the preservice education of teachers gives them the potential for either great harm or great improvements in teacher education (Stevens, 1978). Even the cooperating teachers themselves did not feel that they were adequately prepared to perform their roles in the internship (Lepke, 1979; Ratsoy, Babcock, and Caldwell, 1978).

A study was conducted by Peterson (1977) on student beliefs prior to their internship. He developed a 46-item belief questionnaire and administered it to 110 student teachers, 72 cooperating teachers and 11 faculty supervisors. The results revealed a large amount of agreement on the educational issues in the internship and on the manner of assessing good teaching. It was also revealed that the cooperating teacher was oriented to the practical, rather than the theoretical, demands of discipline and class progress in their particular school system. These are important factors to be considered in selecting those who

are going to be illustrating the relationship of educational theory to practice.

Simms' (1975) study tried to determine the extent to which cooperating teachers' supervisory practices reflected current beliefs on student teaching. A self-administering questionnaire, to determine demographic data and the extent of student teacher involvement in activities, was completed by 201 randomly selected cooperating teachers. The results of the study indicated that most of the cooperating teachers involved their student teachers in activities during the internship. It was also indicated by the cooperating teachers that they wanted inservice training for cooperating teachers, workshops on trends and innovations in student teaching, and a partnership formed between the schools and the university to improve teacher education.

The Student Teachers' Rating on Cooperating Teachers

In spite of the fact that the cooperating teacher's role in the internship is so significant, there are practically no provisions made for continuous evaluation and feedback to help improve the cooperating teacher's supervisory behavior. Something even harder to understand is that we have not sought any participation on the part of the person most affected, the student teacher (Stevens and Smith, 1978). The cooperating teacher is more influential than the faculty supervisor on the student teacher's personality, teaching style, classroom management and professionalism.

Barrows (1979) and Webb (1979) determined that the cooperating teachers were the most powerful and significant factors in the internship. It was revealed that cooperating teachers wished to be more involved in establishing policy and standards for teacher education programs, while college administrators felt they should not be more involved (Bush, 1976). An experiment on collaborative supervision in the internship, involving the cooperating teachers and the student teachers, revealed that the cooperating teacher became significantly more aware of the degree of helpfulness of a response without a significant increase in ability to respond in a helpful way (Pace, 1974).

Competencies and Behaviours of Cooperating Teachers

Concerns have been expressed over the need for training cooperating teachers. First, there is the need to determine those competencies and behaviors that the cooperating teachers must exhibit for a good experience to take place for the student teachers.

There were many studies conducted on the perceived competencies of cooperating teachers and on the training of cooperating teachers. All studies agreed that cooperating teachers should be trained for their role in the internship. Drummond's study (1980) revealed that communication skills were important to cooperating teachers. A study by Loomis (1980) identified 32 cooperating teacher competencies important for the internship. Studies by Henderson (1978) and Matgouranis (1978) revealed that a cooperating teacher

should be able to analyze and evaluate a student teachers' performance. It was determined that the systematic feedback of information on a student teacher's performance in lesson planning helped to improve skills in this area (Pepicky, 1975).

Perceptual differences between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher on the role of the cooperating teacher did not affect evaluations of the student teacher's internship (Nightingale, 1978). Studies conducted on the training of cooperating teachers generally (Nelson, 1975; Weiner, 1975), in specific skills Pagliaro, 1978; Laor, 1976), and in specific instructional modes (Kilgore 1977; Hutslar, 1976) all revealed improved performance on the part of the cooperating teacher that received training.

Other studies looked at the desirable characteristics (Ratsoy, Babcock, and Caldwell, 1978; Elliott, 1975); the effect as an observer (McIntyre, 1977), and the teaching competencies (Campbell and Williamson, 1974; Kirkpatrick 1974) of cooperating teachers. The areas of developing teaching skills and human relations (personality factors) were important to a meaningful internship.

Cooperating Teacher - Student Teacher Relationships

The relationship that is formed in the internship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher will have an effect on the internship. Finding the best relationship would decidedly enhance the learning effect for the student teacher. As in other learning situations, if there is a poor relationship and conflict between the participants, then motivation and opportunities to learn are reduced. It is important that the student teacher be accepted by the students and staff in the cooperating teacher's school. Aichele (1979) reported that it is important that the cooperating teacher develop a good relationship and communication with the student teacher and, that the student teacher should also be acquainted with the school rules, classroom management techniques, and evaluation methods.

The cooperating teacher was found to be the primary influencing agent in the student teacher's use of classroom technical skills (Copeland 1979); use of questioning skills (Copeland, 1977); being aware of classroom teaching concerns (Hardy, 1977; Nelson, 1977); and, maintaining classroom control (Templin, 1979). Copeland (1978) found that the ecology of a classroom had a significant effect on a student teacher's achievement of target skills.

Hammer (1978), Hanna (1977), Castle (1977), Abotti and Kursin (1976) conducted studies on the relationship between cooperating teachers' and student teachers' cognitive

styles, beliefs and values. The results of these studies were not conclusive as no significant relationships were discovered.

The matching of cooperating teacher and student teacher characteristics and their effect on the outcome of the internship were investigated by Gates (1977), Morra (1977), Lewis (1976), Stelljes (1976), Campbell (1975) and Mankart (1974). Half of the studies supported the belief that compatability of personalities was important while the other half of the studies found the results inconclusive.

Summary

There has been much research activity in the area of cooperating teacher responsibilities and role. This is only right as the influence of the cooperating teacher on the student teacher is so strong. In most college and university internship programs, the student teachers spend at least 150 classroom hours (6 weeks), plus preparation time before and after the school day, in close contact with the cooperating teacher. This is close to the equivalent amount of time a student spends on the subject in which they obtain an academic major; much more time than they spend with any one or even two professors at college. The cooperating teacher is the person who helps the student teacher put into practice all the theory taught. The cooperating teacher, acting as a model, illustrates how the theory is to be applied in the reality of the classroom. It is no wonder the

cooperating teacher is so influential.

When the facts are accepted by the colleges and universities and all the research done and read; how can teacher education institutions continue their present practices? Cooperating teachers are randomly assigned not selected; they are not asked what areas of teaching should be emphasized in the teacher education program; they are at best only casuallly acquainted with the institution's internship program; and, they are usually only playing a secondary role in the evaluation of the internship.

The two areas where almost all the research seems to be concentrated are on the competencies and expected behaviors of the cooperating teacher and in the relationship established between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. The literature prior to 1974 has established the influence of cooperating teachers on the student teacher, so there should be more research in the area of the effect of the student teacher on the cooperating teacher; and, on the student teacher's views of the internship.

There is definitely a need for more research to identify and remove the areas of conflicts that arise between the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. Any conflicts between the cooperating teachers and their student teachers could probably be eliminated by more attention being paid to the selection and inservice training of both cooperating and student teachers.

Cooperating teachers' attitudes toward the internship

the student teacher, and the classroom are extremely important and should be known prior to the selection of cooperating teachers. Once again, since the cooperating teacher exerts such a strong influence on the skills and behaviors of the student teacher, then only those teachers that have positive attitudes and educationally sound behaviors should be selected to be cooperating teachers. More research is needed in this area.

The literature indicates that the following factors must be considered by teacher training institutions when planning internships for their student teachers:

1) Cooperating teachers must be carefully selected on the basis of willingness, personality, subject knowledge, and appropriate teaching skills.
2) The "atmosphere" of the cooperating teacher's school should be considered.
3) Cooperating teachers must be trained in observation and evaluation.
4) The public schools should be consulted on classroom skills and appropriate theory pertinent to the training of student teachers.
5) A significantly clear and important role in the evaluation process must be given to cooperating teachers.
6) An evaluation of the internship and its participants by all the participants.
7) The interns, student teachers, must be "prepared" for the internship.

There is a need for more research in all 7 areas listed above, but there is an even more urgent and greater need for the dissemination of the research results to the institutions involved in teacher education. Just as urgent is the need for practices that are based on an awareness of the well established fact that the cooperating teacher exerts the major influence on student teachers' classroom practices.

Cooperating teachers were revealed as being dissatisfied with the present student teaching programs (Holt, 1978); yet, they had positive attitudes towards their role in the internship (Gayles, 1977); Ebbs (1975) discovered a negative relationship between authoritarian personality and attitudes of cooperating teachers and student teachers, and between the teaching behaviors of cooperating teachers. Collaborative supervision had a significantly positive effect on the cooperating teacher's evaluation of a student teacher (Earp, 1975). An area that needs more research is that of the functional roles of cooperating teachers as perceived by all participants in the internship (Forley, 1973).

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